

PHIL 125: BEYOND DUALISM

Harvard University
Spring 2021: M 3-5; W 3-4

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: W 4-5 and by appointment (email me to make an appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Few metaphysicians would identify as Cartesian dualists today. Nevertheless, it's hard to deny that we live in a world shaped by Cartesian dualism: we distinguish somatic health from mental health; we dissociate our minds from our bodies on a long run; we try to get the mind back into the body through yoga; we say that people with gender dysphoria feel their psychological gender identity is out of line with their physical sex. After looking at the two sides of Cartesian dualism, Cartesian body and Cartesian mind, we will consider some of the notorious metaphysical problems it gives rise to and six 17th century attempts to push back against it in the figures of Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, and Anton Wilhelm Amo.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

Phil 125 is a course in the history of philosophy. As a philosophy course, we will focus on the philosophical positions and arguments for them that our philosophers offer. As a history of philosophy course, we will engage in the sympathetic reconstruction of our philosophers' positions and arguments; this will require that we take into consideration, as much as we can, their 17th century philosophical motives and intellectual context.

If you work hard in this course, you can expect to:

- better understand some central topics of discussion among 17th c. philosophers, along with the various motivations for and constraints on the positions they hold;
- clearly articulate those positions and the arguments our philosophers offer for them in discussion and in writing;
- critically evaluate those positions and arguments; that means determining their *assumptions* and their *consequences*, reconstructing the *arguments* and *sub-arguments*, and *assessing* the arguments for cogency given the assumptions and consequences;
- develop your skills in a cooperative philosophical discussion that aims at the shared goal of better understanding the texts, positions, and arguments;
- better understand how conceptual change comes about;
- practice using the philosophical tools you have acquired in other philosophy courses: conceptual analysis, thought experiment, counterexamples, disambiguation of concepts and positions, argument reconstruction and/or mapping, etc.;
- develop your research skills through the writing of a research paper.

PREPARATION FOR THE COURSE

This course is an upper level philosophy course designed for advanced concentrators and starting graduate students. The preparation I will expect from you includes:

- familiarity with basic philosophical concepts and tools;
- some familiarity with early modern philosophy (e.g., I will assume you have been through Descartes's argument for mind-body dualism and his substance-principle attribute-mode ontology);
- familiarity with the norms of philosophical writing (I do not expect you to have done a *research* paper in philosophy before, but I do expect you to have worked on the basic skills of philosophical writing);
- familiarity with basic research tools in philosophy and accessing online texts: EEBO (*Early English Texts Online*); *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; *PhilPapers*, *Philosophers Index* and *JStor*. NB: *You should never use Wikipedia for scholarly research.*

COURSE TEXTS

I've made an effort to make as many of the texts as possible available in online versions (either as links to electronic versions or as pdfs). Still, having a physical copy of some of the texts will be very useful, so buy some of them if you are able. The order of priority for purchasing physical copies: Descartes' *Philosophical Writings*, volumes 1 and 2; Conway's *Principles*; Cavendish's *Observations*; Elisabeth's *The Correspondence*. You can order these and other physical books through [this link](#) at the Coop.

Required Primary Texts:

- Amo, Anton Wilhelm. 1734. *The apatheia of the Human Mind or The Absence of Sensation or Sense in the Human Mind and its presence in our Organic and Living Body*. Pdf available on the course website. Critical edition available as *Anton Wilhelm Amo's Philosophical Dissertations on Mind and Body*, edited and translated by Stephen Menn and Justin E.H. Smith (Oxford University Press, 2020). ISBN-13: 978-0197501627
- Cavendish, Margaret. 1664. *Philosophical Letters: Or, modest reflections upon some opinions in natural philosophy, maintained by several famous and learned authors of this age, expressed by way of letters: By the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent princess, The Lady Marchioness of Newcastle*. PL is available online through EEBO (Early English Books Online; access through Hollis). It will be also available in pdf form on the course website.
- Cavendish, Margaret. 2001 (originally 1666). *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Edited by Eileen O'Neill. Cambridge. ISBN-13: 978-0521776752. *Observations* is also available online through EEBO and also through Women Writers Online, but not with O'Neill's very helpful introduction.
- Cavendish, Margaret. 1668. *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*. London. Available online through EEBO.
- Conway, Anne. 1996 (originally 1690). *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Edited by Allison P. Coudert and Taylor Corse. Cambridge. ISBN-13: 978-0521479042. *Principles* is also available online through EEBO, though without the helpful introduction by Coudert.
- Cudworth, Ralph. 1678. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*. London. Available on EEBO.
- Descartes, René. 1985. *The Philosophical Writings of René Descartes*. Translated and edited by Cottingham, Stoothoff and Murdoch. Volumes 1-2. (Cambridge) ISBN-13: 978-0521288071 and 978-0521288088.

Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and Descartes, René. 2007. *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*. Edited and translated by Lisa Shapiro. (Chicago). ISBN-13: 978-0226204420. I will also put a pdf of the relevant letters on the website.

More, Henry. 1659. *Immortality of the Soul*. London. Available online through EEBO.

Useful Resources:

EEBO (*Early English Books Online*) is a terrific resource for finding English language works that are now in the public domain. It is accessible through Hollis and through the course website.

Project VOX: a website devoted to compiling materials on women philosophers of the early modern period: <http://projectvox.library.duke.edu/pg/>

Kroetsch, Cameron. Annotated Guide to Margaret Cavendish's Texts:

<http://www.digitalcavendish.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Kroetsch2013.pdf>

Duncan, Stewart. Guide to Margaret Cavendish's *Philosophical Letters*:

<http://stewartduncan.org/letters-philosophical-letters/>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

- **Attendance.** We meet as a seminar to discuss the primary texts only once a week, on Mondays. (We will also meet on Wednesdays for “section” to work on research skills; see below.) If you miss seminar, you will miss some critical discussion and the rest of us will miss your contributions. That said, I realize that even the most diligent students have to miss a class on occasion due to illness or some other emergency, especially given the complicated times we are in right now. *Please notify me as soon as possible if you have such an issue.*

- **Collaborative participation** in seminar. A seminar should be an intense and productive intellectual experience, and every one of us is responsible for making it work. Shared responsibility is if anything *more* important in the online format. As in all classroom settings, it is important that we be **respectful** of each other's time and views. I also expect you to be proactive in helping to generate and sustain a collective learning environment. At a minimum, that means you must *show up to class on time, actively listen, and take notes*. But I'll expect even more of you. I'll expect you to **take intellectual risks, to support and encourage your classmates in taking risks, and to trust me that I'll be there to support you** as well. Building this kind of trust will take work. Be conscientious about doing your part to empower your classmates and remember that we can all learn a great deal from a mistake that someone wasn't afraid to make. Here are some tips on how to participate in seminar well:

- **Preparation** is essential. Come to seminar not only having *read and re-read* the assigned texts, but also having taken *copious notes* on them, *thought* about them, *jotted down questions that you have* about them (no question is a dumb question!), and *prepared the text assignment by writing down ideas, gathering relevant passages, and formulating questions* about it. Think about *connections across seminar meetings*. Sometimes things we discuss one week will only become clear several weeks later! (And sometimes things that seemed clear one week will become murky several weeks later! That's actually progress.) *Steady work*—rather than sporadic work—is a key to success. I provide a typical weekly work schedule below to give you a sense for how to maintain a steady work flow.

•• **Take notes!** The evidence here is clear: For the kind of learning we're after in this class, taking notes longhand just works better.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159>

https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/note-taking-low-tech-often-best?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=09.05.2017%20%281%29

•• **Specificity and conciseness** keep us on task. When talking about an assigned reading, refer to it directly. Have it in hand, point to specific passages, and be precise. Sometimes, we have to talk our way into the point we're making: We learn by verbal exploration. We need to be patient with each other when this is happening. But the flip side of this is always striving to be as concise in our discussion contributions as we can. Try to say things only once, and trust others to give you the space to clarify later if necessary.

•• **Respond directly** whenever possible. Pick up from where the last person left off. Use the same examples and the same language. If you want to pull the discussion in a new direction, first check if anyone else wants to say something more directly related. Since we don't have good opportunities for eye contact in the online format, using classmates' names becomes all the more important.

•• **Ask for clarity** if someone has said something you don't get. You can ask that person to repeat it. Try rephrasing it to see if you understood. Ask for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

•• **Awkward Silences** and hesitation are okay. Don't feel you need to rush to speak and don't worry if you need a little time to articulate something. Contributing to class discussion is more than the number of words you say. If you are struggling to articulate something, that's probably a sign that you are saying something that is new and not obvious!

•• **If you have a quiet personality**, you might find contributing to class discussion more difficult than your outgoing classmates. Don't let this stop you! Come with one or two things prepared and be sure to say them early on. You will find that challenging yourself to contribute early will break the ice and you'll feel more comfortable participating as class goes on. *If you're a confident contributor*, use your confidence for good and not evil: Help bring others into discussion, refer to your classmates by name, and be positive about the contributions of those who don't say as much.

•• **We are truth-seeking, and openness helps.** Avoid the "search and destroy" mode, both with your classmates and with the texts we read. Approach others' ideas—and your own!—with charity and critical openness. Be adventurous and take risks. Commit to being curious and having fun.

• **Weekly pre-class and post-class assignments.** Each week, I will give you a specific assignment for seminar. I don't expect anyone to have worked out a complete and polished response to the assignment before class. That's the point of seminar. The aims of the assignment are (a) to help you come to class with a preliminary understanding of the material, a sense for what's relevant to answering the assignment questions, and a readiness to bounce ideas off each other so that we can, collectively, get a more solid handle on the material and (b) to help you work on some basic philosophical skills that will be put to work in your research paper. **After class**, you will write up the assignment, drawing on what you learned in seminar, and turn it in on the Canvas website **by 5:00 p.m. (EST) on Tuesday**. You may **opt out of two of these assignments free of penalty**, because, well, life happens. The flip side of that is that I will not accept late assignments. These assignments will help us to focus on my planned agenda.

But I'm also interested in your agenda! So please also bring to class questions of your own: passage you found puzzling or interesting; arguments you'd like to go through; concepts that were difficult; background that you think is important to understanding the text.

• **Weekly section.** We will have a section on Wednesdays lasting no more than an hour (sometimes less) that are devoted to research. During the first part of the term, you will post an annotated Research Tool on a collaborative Google Doc for one of the *post*-Descartes figures on the syllabus. This will give us all a taste for the figures and issues we'll study in more detail in the second half of the term so that you can decide whether you want to write your research paper on one of them. During the second part of the term, we will talk through your Research Step assignments in section. This will give you the chance to get some support and feedback as you begin the research process. The Research Tools and Research Steps will be graded on a 0/1 basis.

• **Research paper.** You will write a research paper of 3,000-4,000 word (roughly 12-16 double-spaced pages) due May 5 at 5:00 p.m. Writing a research paper is a process that includes exploring the field and literature, identifying an appropriately focused topic, gathering suitable secondary literature, creating an annotated bibliography, formulating a thesis, garnering evidence *and* counter-evidence for your thesis, drafting the paper, consulting with others, and rewriting your paper. The Research Steps mentioned above will guide you through this process.

GRADES

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly Assignments: 30%
Research Steps: 10%
Research Paper: 40%
Participation: 20%

See the Canvas website for an explanation for how I will be grading the assignments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to doing philosophy, and so I encourage you to talk about the course material with other students. On the other hand, *the work you*

hand in for your assignments and your research paper must be your own. If books, articles, websites, or discussions have helped you formulate your ideas, cite them. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses that undermine the trust on which the scholarly endeavor rests. For information on Harvard's academic integrity policies, please visit <https://college.harvard.edu/academics/academic-integrity>.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with me by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in my inability to respond in a timely manner.

ACADEMIC HELP: The Harvard College Writing Center provides individual consultations for any writing assignment (<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/>). The Bureau of Study Counsel offers individual and group tutoring for any course (<http://bsc.harvard.edu/>). Resident Deans of Freshmen and Allston Burr Assistant Deans will work with you through your Yard or House to provide academic assistance and personal support. You also have access to help from the **Philosophy Department Writing Fellow**: Appointments may be made through the department website, under the "Undergraduate" menu.

OTHER CONCERNS: Life at college can be very challenging. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, anxious, or depressed. If you're struggling, I'm happy to listen and to help you find help. For information on confidential counseling and mental health services at Harvard, you can call 617-495-5711 (24 hours) or visit <http://huhs.harvard.edu/services/counseling-and-mental-health>.

WEEKLY WORK SCHEDULE

Here is a breakdown of the weekly work structure for this course:

Thurs-Sun: set aside 2-3 blocks of time in this period to...

- read and re-read the required texts;
- maybe read some of the recommended texts for help;
- prepare the text assignment for seminar—the more prep you do *before* seminar, the more productive the seminar discussion will be and the less work you'll have to do *after* seminar;
- do some work toward the weekly research assignment.

Mon:

- Seminar: 3:00-5:00 p.m. on Zoom;
- Begin to write up text assignment in light of seminar discussion.

Tues:

- Finish writing up the text assignment;
- Turn in text assignment on the Canvas site by 5:00 p.m.;
- Do the week's research assignment.

Wed:

- Section to discuss research assignments: 3:00-4:00 on Zoom;
- Office Hours: 4:00-5:00 on Zoom.

COURSE CALENDAR

Recommended readings with an asterisk (*) are good pieces to get started with.

Week 0

January 25 & 27: Introduction

In the initial meeting, we will first get to know each other a bit. We will then talk through your pre-theoretical intuitions about mind, body, soul, life, and some related concepts. I will then introduce the topic of the course by surveying the metaphysical transition from Aristotelian hylomorphism to Cartesian dualism and the dramatic changes brought about by Descartes' realigning the conceptions soul, mind, body and life. We'll see how much influence Descartes has had on our conceptions of these things! And I'll briefly introduce the figures who will be pushing back on Cartesian dualism. On Wednesday, we'll go into the nuts and bolts of the course structure and assignments, and we will set some discussion norms for the course. To prepare for Monday, I recommend that you review Cartesian dualism by reading the following things:

Meditations, "Synopsis" (CSM II 9-11)

Principles I.51-75 (CSM I 210-222)

Rozemond, Marleen. 2008. "Descartes's Dualism." In *A Companion to Descartes*. Edited by Janet Broughton and John Carriero. Blackwell. 372-389.

Week 1

February 1 & 3: Descartes' Conception of Body 1 (Metaphysics and Physics)

This week we'll look closely at Descartes' conception of the nature of body (or matter or material substance) and some of its consequences: the relation between body and space; the rejection of void or empty space; the nature of rarefaction and condensation; impenetrability; motion; force and cause of motion; individuation of bodies.

Required Reading:

The World (CSM I 79-98); *Principles*, "Preface to the French Edition" and "Dedicatory Letter to Elizabeth" (CSM I 179-192), I.51-76 (CSM I 210-222), Book II (CSM I 223-247); *Letters to More* (CSMK 360-367, 371-375, 380-382) and *Letters to Arnauld* (CSMK 354-359).

Text Assignment 1: What makes something a body? Skill: exposition and argument reconstruction. Write-up due Tuesday, February 2, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Research Assignment: Post an annotated research tool on the Google Doc for one of the post-Descartes figures by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Literature (places to start to poke around in the issues):

Della Rocca, Michael. 1999. "When a Body Meet a Body. In *New Essays on The Rationalists*. Edited by R. J. Gennaro and C. Huenemann. Oxford.: 48-81.

Des Chene, Dennis. 1996. *Physiologia*. Cornell. Chapter 8 "Motion and Its Causes" and Chapter 9 "Parts of Matter."

Hatfield, Gary. 1997. "Force (God) in Descartes' Physics." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 10: 113-140.

Reid, Jasper. 2014. "Descartes and the Individuation of Bodies." *Archiv* 96(1): 38-70.
*Woolhouse, Roger. 1994. "Descartes and the Nature of Body." *BJHP* 2(1): 19-33.

Week 2

February 8 & 10: Descartes' Conception of Body 2 (Biology and Psychology)

This week we will look at Descartes' mechanism, and in particular at his mechanization of life and much of psychology. The first thing to come to grips with is *how very much* Descartes attempts to mechanize. The second thing to puzzle over are the difficulties he runs into: what is the principle of life? (what distinguishes living from non-living bodies?); how do we individuate one organism from another (the "boundary problem") and a single organism over time (the "growth problem"?); do biological functions smuggle in illegitimate teleology?; what's the relationship between the functional and micromechanical levels of analysis?; what is the metaphysical status of an organism?

Required Reading:

Treatise on Man (CSM I 99-108) [NB: unabridged version edited by Thomas Hall currently available through Hathitrust on Hollis]; *Discourse on Method* 5-6 (CSM I 131-151); *Description of the Human Body* (CSM I 314-324); *Passions* I.2-6 (CSM I 328-330). NB: Don't get bogged down in the details of the mechanisms. What you are looking for is the vision.

Text assignment 2: What makes something a living or animate body? Skill: Exposition, Argument Reconstruction, and Evidence Gathering. Re-write due Tuesday, February 9, 5:00 p.m. EST.
Research assignment: Post an annotated research tool on the Google Doc for one of the post-Descartes figures by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Literature:

Brown, Deborah. 2011. "Cartesian Functional Analysis." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. DOI:10.1080/00048402.2011.566274.
Des Chene, Dennis. 2001. *Spirits & Clocks: Machine & Organism in Descartes*. Cornell. Introduction, Chapter 4 "Tools of Knowledge" and Chapter 6 "Unity of the Body."
*Detlefsen, Karen. 2015. "Descartes on the Theory of Life and Methodology in the Life Sciences." In *Early Modern Medicine and Natural Philosophy*. History, Philosophy and Theory in the Life Science 14. Edited by P. Distelzweig et al. Springer. 141-171.
Hatfield, Gary. 2008. "Animals." In *A Companion to Descartes*. Edited by J. Broughton and J. Carriero. Blackwell. 404-425.
*Hatfield, Gary. 2012. "Mechanizing the Sensitive Soul." In *Matter and Form in Early Modern Science*. Edited by G. Manning. Brill. 151-186.

Week 3 NO CLASS on Monday, February 15 (Presidents Day). We will have our seminar meeting this week on Wednesday and will meet for two hours.

February 17: Descartes' Conception of Mind

This week we will look at Descartes' two-step transformation of the *other* half of the world: (a) the transformation from soul to the mind and (b) the transformation from mind to Cartesian mind. (Both occur sneakily in Meditation 2.) We'll puzzle over the nature of the Cartesian mind. It is a thinking thing. But what is thought? We'll also attend to the differences between the embodied mind and the disembodied mind.

Required Primary Reading:

Meditations, Meditation 2 (CSM II 16-23), Meditation 3, paras 5-15 (CSM II 25-29), Meditation 6 (CSM II 50-62); *O&R* 3.2-8 (CSM II 122-130); *O&R* 4.1-2 (CSM II 138-146 and 154-164); *O&R* 6.9 (CSM II 281-282 and 294-296); *Principles* I.8-12 (CSM I 195-197), IV.187-198 (CSM I 278-285); *Comments on a Certain Broadsheet* (CSM I 294-311); *Passions* I.17-29 (CSM I 335-339).

Also worth looking at: *O&R* 2.1 (CSM II 77-78, 93-96); *O&R* 2 Appendix - definitions and proposition 4 (CSM II 113-114 and 199); *O&R* 3.2 (CSM II 122-124); *O&R* 4.1 (CSM II 139-144, 154-162), *O&R* 5, On the Second Meditation, topic 4 (CSM II 183-185, 246-247); *O&R* 6, Appendix and Reply 10 (CSM II 282-284, 296-301).

Text Assignment 3: What makes something a mind? Thought. What makes something count as a thought? Skills: gathering evidence and counter-evidence. Rewrite due on Thursday, Feb 18, 5:00 p.m. (EST)
No Research Assignment this week!

Recommended Secondary Reading:

- Alanen, Lilli. 2003. *Descartes's Concept of Mind*. Harvard. Chapter 3 "Thought, Consciousness, and Language."
- Pasnau, Robert. 2007. "The Mind-Soul Problem." In *Mind, Cognition and Representation: The Tradition of Commentaries on Aristotle's De Anima*. Edited by P. J.J.M. Bakker and J. M.M.H. Thijssen. Ashgate. 3-20.
- *Rozemond, Marleen. 2006. "The Nature of the Mind." In *The Blackwell Guide to Descartes' Meditations*. Edited by Stephen Gaukroger. Blackwell. 48-66.
- Simmons, Alison. 2012. "Cartesian Consciousness Reconsidered." *Philosophers' Imprint* 12(2): 1-21.

Week 4

February 22 & 24: Elisabeth Poses a Problem: Interaction (and Union)

Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia poses a problem to Descartes: how, exactly, are mind and body supposed to interact? They clearly do: body acts on mind in sensory perception and mind acts on body in voluntary action (the case Elisabeth focuses on). Descartes fails to give her a direct answer. (Some say he simply mansplains.) He starts talking about mind-body union, and says our "primitive notion" of the mind-body union is supposed to help us understand how mind and body interact. What is this "primitive notion of the mind-body union"? There are at least two issues at stake here. First, how do mind and body together (two substances) form a *single* human being (a union)? Second, how does the union help us understand the mind-to-body causal interaction with which Elisabeth was concerned? Descartes persistently relies on a puzzling analogy with gravity or heaviness to explain himself. (He offers it to Elisabeth, but repeats it to Arnauld.) What's up with that?

Scholarship on the mind-body union has focused on several issues:

1. What's the relationship between *mind-body interaction* and *mind-body union*? Is one prior to the other? Does union simply *consist* in there being causal interaction between mind and body? Or is there something more to it? Does, in fact, the possibility of mind-body interaction depend on an antecedent metaphysical union between mind and body? (Radner 1971; Broughton and Mattern 1978; Chappell 1994; Schmaltz 1992; Voss 1994)

2. *Nature of the union.* Responses run from (a) an Aristotelian substance (Hoffman 1986) and (b) a third Cartesian substance (Schmaltz 1992) to (c) nothing more than two Cartesian substances causally linked (Chappell 1994; Bennett 1994), with a whole lot of positions in between (Alanen 2008; Brown 2007; Curley and Koivuniemi 2015; Hoffman 1986; Rozemond 1998 chapter 5; Schmaltz 1992; Shapiro 2003; Simmons 2017)

3. Is the mind united to the *whole body* or just to *one part* of the body, viz., the pineal gland? This topic raises the spectre of “holenmerism” (the view that the soul is whole in the whole of the body *and* whole in any single part of it); if the soul is present *in the whole body* does that make it extended? (Rozemond 2003) NB: some think that Descartes is torn between his mechanism and Christian doctrine on this topic.

Required Primary Reading:

Optics 4-6 (CSM I 164-175) for an extended discussion of one place in which body interacts with mind; *Correspondence with Elisabeth*, 6 May 1643 to 1 July 1643 (Shapiro 61-73) and 8 July 1644 to 24 July 1645 (Shapiro 81-96); Fifth Replies (CSM II 266 and 275); Sixth Replies (CSM II 296-300) *Letters to Regius* (CSMK 181-183, 199-201, 205-209, 210, 213-214, 254-255); *Letter to Mesland* (CSMK 241-244); *Letters to Arnauld* (CSMK 354-356 and 356-359); and *Passions* I.30-50 (CSM I 338-348).

Text assignment 4: The notorious problems of mind-body interaction and union. Skills: exposition and argument reconstruction, sympathetic interpretation. Write-up due Tuesday, February 23, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Research assignment: Post an annotated research tool on the Google Doc for one of the post-Descartes figures by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Reading (taking its lead from the correspondence with Elisabeth):

* Koivuniemi, Minna and Curley, Ed. 2015. “A Kind of Dualism.” *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*. Oxford.

Normore, C.G. 2011. “Cartesian Unions.” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 35: 223-239.

Perler, Dominik. 2016. “Human Being.” *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*. Edited by Larry Nolan. Cambridge.

*Rozemond, Marleen. 2003. “Descartes, Mind-Body Union, and Holenmerism.” *Philosophical Topics* 31(1-2): 343-367.

*Simmons, Alison. 2017. “Mind-Body Union and the Limits of Cartesian Metaphysics.” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 17(14): 1-36.

Yandell, David. 1997. “What Descartes Really Told Elisabeth: Mind-Body Union as a Primitive Notion.” *BJHP* 5(2): 249-273.

Further Reading:

Fowler, C.F., O.P. 1999. *Descartes on the Human Soul: Philosophy and the Demands of Christian Doctrine*. Kluwer.

Week 5 NO CLASS on Monday, March 1 (Wellness Day)

March 3

We will not cover any new texts or substantive material this week. We will meet on Wednesday for “section” as usual in which we will go over new research tools and begin to

gear up for writing the research paper. Also **get started early on next week's reading!** It's tough going!

Research Assignment: Research Step 1, Philosophical Topics, due by class on Wednesday.

Week 6

March 8 & 10

The Cambridge Platonists: Henry More and Ralph Cudworth

Henry More and Ralph Cudworth are as much dualists as Descartes, but they draw the line between material body and immaterial soul in a different place and they have reasons to hang onto the word "soul" or "spirit" rather than switch over to the more Cartesian "mind." Their work had a huge influence on the others, and especially on Conway and Cavendish. Because the text is especially difficult, I strongly recommend reading Jasper Reid's piece to guide you through the details of and problems for More's conception of extended soul or spirit and Matt Leisinger's piece to guide through Cudworth on consciousness. You will need to rely on all the philosophical skills we've been working on in the coming weeks!

Required Primary Text:

More, Henry. *Immortality of the Soul*, Book I, chapters 1-5, 7-8, 11. [For some interesting arguments against materialism, venture into Book II!]

Cudworth, Ralph. "[Digression concerning the plastick life of nature...](#)" starting on p. 178 in [True Intellectual System of the Universe, Book I, chapter 3, Note 37](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Text assignment 5: Dualism, Cambridge Style. Skill: critical engagement. Write-up due Tuesday, March 9, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Research Assignment: Research Step 2, Research Plan, due by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Literature

*Leisinger, Matt. "Cudworthian Consciousness." Manuscript.

*Reid, Jasper. 2019. "The Cambridge Platonists: Material and Immaterial Substance." In *Philosophy of Mind in the Early Modern and Modern Ages*. Edited by Rebecca Copenhaver. *The History of the Philosophy of Mind: Volume 4*. New York: Routledge. 43-58.

Reid, Jasper. 2003. "Henry More on Material and Spiritual Extension" *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 42(2): 532-553. *For a more in depth discussion of More.*

Rozemond, "Cudworth's 'Plastic Natures' and the Limits of Mechanism." Manuscript.

Rozemond, Marleen and Simmons, Alison. "It's Alive!" Manuscript. Section on Henry More.

Week 7

March 15 & 17: Margaret Cavendish's Vital Materialism

This week we'll focus on Cavendish's materialism (apart from God, all that exists is matter; there are no finite souls, minds, witches, or fairies in nature). We'll look first at some of her complaints about the new science's mechanical conception of matter and the methodology that gives rise to it. This will pit her against More. We will then look at her argument for putting self-motion back into matter (which will serve as the ground for putting sentience and rationality into matter). Finally, we'll look at her "three degrees" conception of matter.

Required Primary Texts

Observations Introduction (review xxiii-xxxv), Preface (7-10), An Argumental Discourse (23-42), Observations 1-3 (46-53), 15 (68-72), 25 (95-100), 31 (135-131), 34 (135-136), and 37.15 (184-185).

Philosophical Letters Prefaces, I.1,13, 23, 30, & 42; II.5-7, 11-12, 25, & 29; III.1, 18, & 30; IV.1, 6, & 29 (EEBO and website).

Grounds of Natural Philosophy Part I (website).

Text Assignment 6: Reconceiving matter. Skill: sympathetic argument reconstruction. Write-up due Wednesday, March 17, 5:00 p.m. EST. because Tuesday, March 16 is a Wellness Day. But probably best to get it in Monday night instead!

Research Assignment: Research Step 3: Annotated Bibliography A due by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Literature

Chamberlain, Colin. 2019. "Color in a Material World: Margaret Cavendish against the Early Modern Mechanists." *Phil Review* 128(3): 293-336.

Detlefsen, Karen. 2018. "Margaret Cavendish on Laws and Order." In *Early Modern Women on Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 72-92.

Detlefsen, Karen. 2006. "Atomism, Monism, and Causation in the Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish" *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 3: 199-240.

Detlefsen, Karen. 2007. "Reason and Freedom: Margaret Cavendish on the Order and Disorder of Nature." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 89: 157-191.

Peterman, Alison. 2019. "Margaret Cavendish on Motion and Mereology." *JHP* 57(2): 471-499.

Rozemond, Marleen and Simmons, Alison. "It's Alive!" Section on Cavendish.

*Shaheen, Jonathan. 2017. "Parts of nature and division in Margaret Cavendish's materialism." *Synthese*.

Shaheen, Jonathan. "Cavendish on Causation." Manuscript.

Week 8

March 22 & 24: Margaret Cavendish on Mind and Mentality

This week flip things over and look at the effects of Cavendish's materialism on our conception of mind and mentality: it is everywhere (in some form or other) and it is composite and divided. What does this look like? What are the arguments? Are there ethical consequences of thinking there is mind and feeling everywhere in nature? We may also look at her conception of perception and knowledge as a form of "patterning."

Required Primary Texts

Observations 35-37 (137-194)

Philosophical Letters I.4-10, 14, 18, 22, 24-25, 35-37; II.10, 13-22; III.21 (EEBO and website)

Selected Poems (EEBO and website)

Text Assignment 7: Divided Minds and Panpsychism. Writeup due Tuesday, March 23, 5:00 p.m. EST. Research Assignment: Research Step 4: Project Description, due by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Secondary Literature

Delwiche, Noah. 2018 “Divided we Stand: Margaret Cavendish and the Material Divisibility of Soul.” Harvard Senior Thesis.

Week 9 NO CLASS on Wednesday, March 31 (Wellness Day)

March 29: Conway at 20,000 feet

This week we'll get oriented to Anne Conway's metaphysics. In class, I'll start by talking a bit about her biography and some of the unusual influences on her thought (like the Lurianic Kabbala and Quakerism). We'll look briefly at her overarching substance dualism of God, creation, and Christ, each of which has its own principal attribute (immutability, mutability, and something in between). Then we'll look at the more accessible summary of her metaphysics of creation (that is, of the world or nature) and the way she distinguishes her view from that of Descartes and Hobbes in the closing chapter of her text. We will start to dig into her arguments *against* both dualism and materialism (and more particularly, against dead matter (a “vain fiction”) and pure spirit (which can only be God)).

Required Primary Text

The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy Introduction, Prefaces, Chs. 1-6 and 9

Text Assignment 8: Writeup due Tuesday, March 30 5:00 p.m. EST

No Research Assignment this week!

Recommended Secondary Literature

Borcherding, Julia. “A Most Subtle Matter: The (Im)materialisms of Anne Conway and Margaret Cavendish. Forthcoming in: *The Routledge Handbook on Idealism and Immaterialism*. Edited by B. Göcke & J. Farris.

Grey, John. 2021. “Species and the Good in Anne Conway's Metaethics.” In *Comparative Metaethics: Neglected Perspectives on the Foundations of Morality*. Edited by Colin Marshall. Taylor & Francis: 102-118.

Rozemond, Marleen and Simmons, Alison. “It's Alive!” Section on Conway.

Week 10

April 5 & 7: Conway's Queer Monism

Conway insists that the substance of creation is always and everywhere both male/female, light/dark, spiritual/bodily and that any individual in creation falls somewhere along a continuum of male/female, light/dark, spiritual/material. She draws the striking conclusion, “Consequently, the distinction between spirit and body is only modal and incremental, not essential and substantial” (p. 40). What is more, no individual is stuck in any one position on the continuum; it is mutable and so can change its position on the continuum, becoming, say, *more* male/spiritual/light, or less. In fact, the typical progression involves a kind of Stairway to Heaven in which an individual “transmutes” to ever better, more spiritual conditions. Pain is a critical part of this process. The view has the curious consequence that I could become a banana (presumably if I don't do well) or something like an angel (if I do well).

Required Primary Text

The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy, Chapters 7-8

Recommended Secondary Literature

- Thomas, Emily. 2018. "Anne Conway on the Identity of Creatures over Time." In *Early Modern Women on Metaphysics*. Edited by Emily Thomas. CUP: 131-149.
- Borcherding, Julia. 2019. "Loving the Body, Loving the Soul: Conway's Vitalist Critique of Cartesian and Morean Dualism." *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 9: chapter 1.

Text Assignment 9: Rewrite due Tuesday, April 6, 5:00 p.m. EST

Research Assignment: Research Step 5: Annotated Bibliography B due by class on Wednesday.

Week 11

April 12 & 14: Amo Against the Cartesian Soul

The work of Amo's that we have is his dissertation, which provides an argument against Descartes' conception of the soul as capable of sensations and passions. Amo defends a more traditional Aristotelian view of the human soul (or, really, of the human mind) as reason and reason alone. It is the *body*, on Amo's view, and not the soul or mind, that has sensations and passions.

Required Reading

The apatheia of the Human Mind or *The Absence of Sensation in the Human Mind*, whole thing (it's not long)

Recommended Reading

Smith, Justin. 2015. *Nature, Human Nature and Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy*. Chapters 2 and 8.

Text Assignment 10: Notes and ideas due in class; prose response due by 11:59 p.m. April 11

Research Assignment: Research Step 6, Research Diary, due by class on Wednesday.

Week 12

April 19 & 21 Methodological Questions

This week we take a step back to ask some methodological questions. We started out with Descartes' dualism. The traditional next step would have been to turn to Spinoza and Leibniz. We didn't do that. Instead we read the work of less familiar philosophers: Henry More, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, and Anton Wilhelm Amo. We'll talk about reasons that these figures have been left out of the "canon" and reasons for reshaping the canon by introducing them into it.

Required Reading

O'Neill, Eileen. 1997. "Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History." In *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice*. Edited by Janet A. Kourany. Princeton, 1997. 17-62.

Text Assignment: Just come ready to talk about the reading and the issue; no prose response due

Research Assignment: Research Step 7, Project Portfolio, due on the Canvas Site by class on Wednesday.

Recommended Reading

*Shapiro, Lisa. "What is a Philosophical Canon?" (manuscript posted on <https://philosophymodsquad.wordpress.com>)

Smith, Justin. "The Two Libraries Problem" (manuscript posted on <https://philosophymodsquad.wordpress.com>).

Simmons, Alison. 2019. "New Narratives in Early Modern Philosophy: The Road Ahead." Manuscript.

Week 13

April 26 & 28

Paper Presentations